

many of which operate under a state, as opposed to a federal charter. After careful examination and deliberation, we passed legislation that will more closely regulate the payday loan industry and protect consumers who use these services.

In the end, it’s time to put the past behind us, learn from the mistakes that were made, and ensure that we do not forget the lessons that history taught us.

Good Bills, Bad Bills

I prime sponsored six pieces of legislation this year that were signed into law. Several were public safety related, including one that now allows for the input of victims before a criminal is released after serving their sentence, to determine if more incarceration might serve the public’s interest. Another one allows for medical providers, police, and corrections personnel to share information about dangerous mentally ill offenders before they actually commit a crime. Finally, a bill that will protect child victims of particularly serious assaults. I also had bills dealing with everything from life insurance policies to appropriate processes for setting speed limits within tribal jurisdictions.

But here’s what makes me really happy: killing bad bills in Olympia on your behalf. Crazy ideas come up every year, like taxing you for the miles you drive, or SB 6900 which would have taxed you solely on the displacement size of your engine, to a whole list of bills that would impinge on citizens’ Second Amendment rights. These, along with the general tax increase ideas mentioned earlier, were all stopped. I’ve always said, and still believe, that one of the most important legislative priorities in Olympia is protecting you from bad bills.

A Demographical Shift

I’ve always considered myself to be one of the least partisan people in the Legislature, and in fact, most people don’t really care what political party I’m elected under. I like it that way, because issues have always meant more to me than party politics. That being said, I also believe that a two or more party system works well, and that it is important for all voices to be heard in our form of government.

For a long time, I have believed that the 31<sup>st</sup> District is becoming more and more independent. It was interesting to note in a national poll completed in the middle of May that independents now outnumber Democrats and Republicans on a nationwide basis (Independents 36%, Democrats 35%, Republicans 23%). What’s fascinating is that this national trend, down to the exact percentage point, mirrors a poll that we did in the 31st District exactly one year ago. I believe that the more independent people become, and the less partisan we are, the more we can accomplish as a state and a nation.

Finally,

Lots of folks have been asking me how my son, Andrew, has been doing since returning from his last tour of duty in Afghanistan as an Airborne Infantry Soldier last July. Great news! He recently graduated from CID School, and is now a federal criminal investigator in the United States Army, and recently he and his wife just had their first child, a son. I couldn’t be more proud on both counts.

As always, feel free to call me this summer; I work for you all year long. Whether it is an idea for legislation, or an issue with a state agency, I am here to serve you. Thanks!

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2009 END OF  
SESSION REPORT

31st District Representative

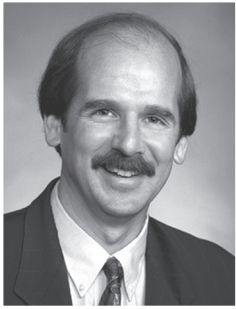
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Dear Neighbor,

*Last fall we were all hoping that the economic downturn would be brief, but that hope quickly faded as the days grew shorter and we settled into a cold and snowy December. By that time, we all knew we were facing the worst economic crisis in a lifetime.*

*In January, I was actually eager to get to Olympia to tackle the difficulties of the worst budget process in generations. Yet I also harbored a deep concern that no matter what we did, pretty much everyone would be mad in the end.*

*But an unexpected thing happened as the winter progressed. As I came back home and met people, I encountered an unanticipated response. People would walk up to me, shake my hand or pat me on the back and offer heartfelt words of encouragement and even compassion, glad that it was me and not them in Olympia. Even more meaningful was when some said they trusted I would do the best that I could, and for them, this would be enough, no matter the outcome.*

*These acts of kindness encouraged me through a dark legislative session, demonstrating the character and sense of community that citizens in the 31st District share.*

*Throughout the seemingly unending snows of last December before the session started, political pundits and newspapers were universally predicting that this Legislature would fail, and not produce a budget on time. Most were predicting, and indeed even insisting, that this Legislature would impose significant general tax increases to balance the budget. But turn the page, and we’ll talk about what really happened.*

Sincerely,

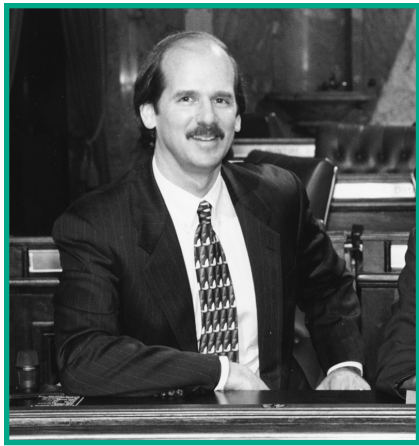
Christopher Hurst  
State Representative  
31<sup>st</sup> Legislative District

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Christopher  
**HURST**

**31st District  
Representative**

# 2009 END OF SESSION REPORT

## Challenging Times Define Leadership

This session began with the legislators themselves breaking into two distinct camps. There were those who spent the 105 days sitting on the sidelines whining. Their motto was, “We don’t solve problems, we just point them out.” The

other group rolled up their sleeves on day one, faced the challenge, and immediately began the arduous process of seeking and implementing solutions.

People without solutions that did nothing but criticize or forecast doom were missing in action. What we needed was hard work and good ideas because we could not fail to do the best possible job on education, government reform, transportation, health care and protecting our most vulnerable citizens.

In the end, the naysayers and pundits were wrong. We passed a balanced budget, completed our work on time, and did so without a general tax increase. Is it a great budget? No. This budget reflects the economic facts of our time. Tough decisions were made, and no area of government was spared.

On the 12th of January, I committed to you that we would balance this budget within existing revenues, and that I would oppose any general tax increase. I knew we would face difficult decisions based on this principle, but felt that government had to face the same realities as families and the business community; learning to live with less while facing an uncertain future.

## Taxes vs. Revenue vs. Services

As the session unfolded, you saw proposals to impose an income tax, raise the sales tax, and increase the B&O taxes on businesses. Early in the session, I banded together with a group of moderates from the majority party and we defeated each and every one of these proposals.

A frustration of this session was that the whiners, incessantly complaining on the sidelines, got the lion’s share of media attention when bad proposals came up. Although they were quick to complain when it suited their purpose of frightening the public, never once did they come back and give credit when each of those proposals were systematically defeated by those who got the real work done.

Although little was amusing this session, I had to smile at one interesting group. Their economic principle was profoundly silly. This fringe political contingent demanded catastrophic cuts to government and taxes, while at the same time insisting that they could actually *expand* services. That we could slash taxes, yet build more roads, that we could cut taxes, yet expand education, and that we could reduce government revenue while locking up more prisoners and putting more police and firefighters on the street. Ideas long on magic, but short on fiscal reality and common-sense truth.

Simply put, people were either part of the problem or part of the solution. The history of human nature has always exposed this defect of character in challenging times.

This isn’t about Democrats versus Republicans, or liberals versus conservatives, this is about difficulty defining honest leadership.

## The Sky Didn’t Actually Fall

This economic crisis was an opportunity to make government leaner. It was also an opportunity to see whether we could pass a balanced budget when faced with a \$9 billion decrease in revenue. Both challenges were met.

The same people who sat on the sidelines and spent 105 days whining will want your attention once again. Sadly, they are frustrated because we *didn’t* fail. Rather than admit we passed a balanced budget on time, they will criticize our success as “unsustainable.” They will declare once more, as they have in each of the last 10 years, that the sky is falling, and that citizens should fear for their safety. The exact same nonsense year after year for 10 straight years. But in truth, we passed budgets *without* deficits in each of the last 10 years. Much to their great disappointment, the sky never fell, and people are safer than they were 10 years ago when it comes to public safety. In fact, we now have the lowest statewide crime rate in 17 years.

There are many signs recently that we are either nearing, or at the bottom of this economic downturn. Although the recovery will be long and slow, Washington is now well poised to continue providing responsible levels of service to its citizens, consistent with the economic realities we face. Is it perfect? Far from it. But we resisted the opportunity to trade bad public policy for short-term political expediency.

## Sports Stadiums

Folks in Seattle must have gotten hold of some really bad crack cocaine, as evidenced by their request for a half a billion dollars to remodel Key Arena and Husky Stadium. Can you imagine using tax dollars for this? Me neither, so we said no, and these proposals died. If they come up again next year, I will make sure they will meet the same fate.

## State Park Closures

The good news is that state parks will remain open. However, I will not tell you that you can get something for nothing. The parks will remain open due to a \$5 fee on your vehicle registration that is up to you to pay if you choose when you renew your tabs each year. The fee will go directly to the operation of our state parks system. The old process of charging people for each visit was immensely unpopular, and this new system for those who wish to participate, seems to be working much better.

## Lake Tapps Success, Finally!

After 10 long years we finally have definitive, great news on saving Lake Tapps. This has been a tough journey for many folks in the 31<sup>st</sup> District. In early May, the Lake Tapps Community Council finalized agreements with the Cascade Water Alliance guaranteeing lake levels during normal recreational periods. Jay Manning, the Director of the Department of Ecology, came to a community meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May and reaffirmed that these provisions will be included in the final water permit to be issued later this year.

For the folks on Lake Tapps and their representatives on the Lake Tapps Community

Council, it’s not unlike awakening from a long nightmare. The drive, dedication, and resolve to see this through to the end cannot be understated. I’m proud to have had the opportunity to help. I’m immensely proud of my friends around Lake Tapps who worked so hard for so long and never gave up. Folks in the Lake Tapps area were well served by their community council representatives who put in untold hours. I’d also like to give a public thanks to my political colleague and good friend on the Pierce County Council, Shawn Bunney, who was an outstanding strategist and political ally and who, when things got really tough, always got tougher. In the end, the policy was the thing, and politics were irrelevant.

## Crime and Punishment

This year I had the honor of being named the Chairman of the Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee in the State House of Representatives. My committee deals with all of the criminal laws, public safety issues and the state’s emergency response to everything from natural disasters, to pandemic flu, to man-made disasters, like industrial accidents and terrorism. I take this responsibility very seriously.

This position gives you as citizens in the 31<sup>st</sup> District a greater voice on the matters that come before my committee. Additionally, as a Committee Chairman, I have the opportunity to have a more significant voice on other policy matters before other committees, and will use that voice to see that your ideas and thoughts are well represented in the legislative process.

I feel comfortable in this new role, having already spent 25 years as a police detective and Investigative Commander of a 15-city Homicide/Violent Crimes Task Force. My career on the streets and in courtrooms as a police detective allows me to bring common-sense to what is often a chaotic and politically charged debate. Interestingly, two other law enforcement officers, one a Republican and one a Democrat, also serve on my committee, which makes things even easier. Public safety and the well-being of our citizens will always be job one, and you can rest assured that I will diligently fulfill this responsibility of being not just tough, but also smart on crime.

## “But Everyone Else Was Doing It”

Much has been said about who is responsible and what the root causes of our current economic meltdown are, but suffice to say that the most important thing is that we make sure it doesn’t happen again. The lack of oversight and regulatory enforcement of our financial markets was only part of the problem. The other part lies in what were seemingly responsible and historically conservative businesses engaging in risky behavior for short-term profit simply because everyone else seemed to be doing it.

As we now begin the process of proper enforcement on a national level by the Treasury Department, it’s equally important that the State of Washington proceed forward with diligent and responsible consumer protection and oversight. In that respect, I serve as a member of the Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, with jurisdiction over the insurance and banking interests here in Washington. We passed a number of pieces of legislation this year from this committee that will do just that. We have also been closely monitoring the health of banks and credit unions in Washington State,